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BALLET TODAY

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Peter Craig-Raymond

Preview..

VALLADOLID, one time capital of old Castile, became the re-emergence point at the beginning of this year for a man whose name is hardly known today.

Vincente Escudero, over sixty and almost totally forgotten as a master of gypsy dancing, had received a letter from Paris. "You have been the eagle of the dance—you can become the emperor of instruction." That was the letter's basis. To Escudero, alone in Madrid, it must have appeared as a long-belated anti-climax to his long dancing career.

The letter invited Escudero to Paris as director of a dance school. And, to raise the money needed to pay his fare to Paris, Escudero's friends arranged a farewell performance. Not in Madrid, but in Valladolid.

"Vincente, esto es!" some friend shouted as he finished his performance with a thundering zapateado: and Paris was soon to say the same.

It is hardly necessary for me, to speak about Escudero's background. It is his uncompromising advice, his directive to dancers, which I want to speak about. But I will sketch in the rough track of his career. Born in Valladolid, Escudero ran away from home to live with—and dance with—a band of Granada gypsies. He toured Europe with his wardrobe on his back—then America with the reputation of Anna Pavlova behind him. She died just as the tour commenced... Escudero went on alone. With the coming of the 1939 war, Escudero was forced back to Spain where he formed a company to refute the ballet "experimenting" of the younger generation of Spanish dancers.

THE EAGLE OF THE DANCE

pelled to forget his company, and he took to writing papers of criticism against modern Spanish dance!

Today Vicente Escudero is at the Sallo Pleyel in Paris. Around the world are dotted Spanish companies and dancers almost invariably united in one aim: to do the experimenting Escudero condemns.

But time was on the side of the young—and audiences have short memories. He was com-



Nadia Nerima and David Blair in the new Coppelio.

In Madrid now, I hear, there is a stronger than usual talk of a national ballet for Spain. Excellent: the Spanish dancer has become too frequently an exported talent whilst Spain herself has been merely a home base from which to recruit.

But I am worried by that phrase "Spanish ballet".

In London last month, while Antonio and Flora Albaicin were dancing, two rival companies also appeared. But for Antonio there was more applause, more warmth of response, more "word of mouth" publicity from that audience, persuading others to go and see. And, as I said when I broadcast a month ago on Antonio, it was the more

authentic dances which received the greatest applause.

By authentic I do not mean non-theatrical. Spanish dancers discovered long ago that authenticity is no substitute for theatrical technique. But, although the old dances are polished for greater theatrical effectiveness, they retain the virility, the spirit of their creation. Antonio's least successful works were those which showed a dabbling in classical ballet technique.

Now this is exactly what Escudero has been attacking—although, of course, we were not aware of it. His books and letters repeat over and over

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ISRAELI DANCING

Vera Goldman at the Gandhi Hall,
London

VERA GOLDMAN, a Viennese Jewess, grew up in Israel and was part of the cultural revival of that Jewish state. The critic must approach this Israeli dancing with one clear precept: Israel is a new state but avidly founded and propagated on its ancient basis. Thus any dance system evolving today will, invariably, be more a museum recreation than a rough new frenzy.

I personally would like to see the young Jews of Israel dance in their community—joy at having a new home—I would like to see both the agricultural and industrial building pictured, the friction between traditionalist, religiously-fervent Jews and the young who care more for building a new world. But Israeli dance as it stands cannot be criticized for not giving me the Jewish expression I want to see.

LIMITATION

Vera Goldman is of the Wigman-Duncan era, with a limitation of movement and facial expression which means variety in her dances is carried almost entirely by the costume changes. Various biblical themes such as the story of Ruth, that of Miriam and the "Witch" of Endor are portrayed. This latter, in which the seer conjures up Samuel to warn Saul of his death, was effective.

But I found myself wishing for a dancing as expressive as the exquisite violin pieces by Bloch and Ezrachi played excellently, expressively by Avram Melamed.



Doreen Tempest, Donald Britton, Pirmin Trecu. At top: Tempest, Britton, Trecu, Pauline Wadsworth and Sara Neil.



The Lady and the Fool

THAT John Cranko manages to concoct a spritely, good-looking and composite ballet after shackling himself with a most ludicrous plot is, I suppose, proof of his competence. But why try it in the first place?

The Lady and the Fool, premiered on February 25 but making its first London appearance at the Sadler's Wells Theatre on March 31, gives credit for both scenario and choreography to Cranko, so the plot is his interest, if not his original invention. In fact it is a formula older than ballet itself, but given such decorative and inventive top-coatings that one can almost forget the tawdry basis. Almost, but not quite.

PLOT

A beautiful lady (Patricia Miller) tires of her rich playboy suitors (Gill, Wright, Poole) and falls for the novelty interest of a beggar clown (Macmillan). She takes him, and his friend (Mosaval) to her gay, rich party and eventually goes off with him—here, if anyw here, is the plot's

twist—to share his beggary and be wrapped in rags. One can only wonder why, being rich in the first place she does not carry her new-found suitor to her own home and become his keeper. But the finale, she curled up with her beggar-lover and the other beggar covering her feet with his hole-filled scarf, is pathetic.

In Britain almost anything gets by if only the performer limps on stage and announces he is lame. We are a class-conscious race of underdog-lovers. So Cranko, wise man, has put a crocodile of glycerine to draw our tears in his finale... and how can we condemn?

WITTY

Forgetting the plot, ignoring the hackneyed formula of the ballet, it is still true that *Lady and the Fool* is an unfaltering example of competent dance production. Cranko is a choreographer to be trusted—witty, gay, inventive. His pas de deux for the clowns is reminiscent of Ashton's Ugly Sisters in *Cinderella* but not a copy by any means. The solos for Doreen Tempest and Patricia Miller are excellent. Miller

provides the focal point and the sparking point of the ballet. Given a less attractive, less physically well-equipped, less able dancer, the ballet might fall apart. But her work is excellent, sometimes dazzlingly so.

Several ideas—the peeling masks, the offstage band, the pas de trois—are good. The ballet zips along, helped by a full-blooded score (and, amazingly, an equally big sound from the orchestra) of Verdi fragments arranged by Charles Mackerras and well-costumed by Richard Beer. It is tragic that Beer's glamorous costumes are unhelped by his static, one-dimensional and quite pedestrian decors.

DIGNIFIED

Johaar Mosaval as the second clown impressed me by his sad, dignified acceptance of his tragic existence. Here is a dancer with whom a thoughtful choreographer could co-operate in a ballet of pathetic or spiritual dimensions.

If I cannot lavish praise on the ballet as a project, I can at least say of Cranko that I know of few choreographers who could have produced such an integral, entertaining piece as this. He has not set out to move worlds, and so it is no criticism that here he merely frames molehills. He deserves congratulations.

And Patricia Miller deserves another, more seriously initiated ballet.



Ballet in Review

by PETER

CRAIG-RAYMOND

Janine Charrat

ALTHOUGH the Paris Opera remains the traditional home of French ballet, its future is being shaped by young artists working outside that archaic organization. Perhaps the task of sweeping away some of the cobwebs that have grown round it has hindered Lifar's creative abilities, but certainly his own ballets, despite flashes of brilliance, are on the whole somewhat commonplace; and, while his influence upon the revival of ballet in France has been a profound one, the most stimulating work is being done by the younger generation—by Roland Petit and Janine Charrat.

Their careers have in many respects run parallel: both have been influenced by Lifar, they have worked and danced together, and now both direct companies formed to give expression to a highly individual style of choreography. They are both young, both determined, both unconventional in their approach to ballet. But here the resemblance between them ceases. Petit's recent work is gay, elegant and inconsequential; while Charrat is very much in earnest. Her choreography is intense, sometimes muddled, highly musical,

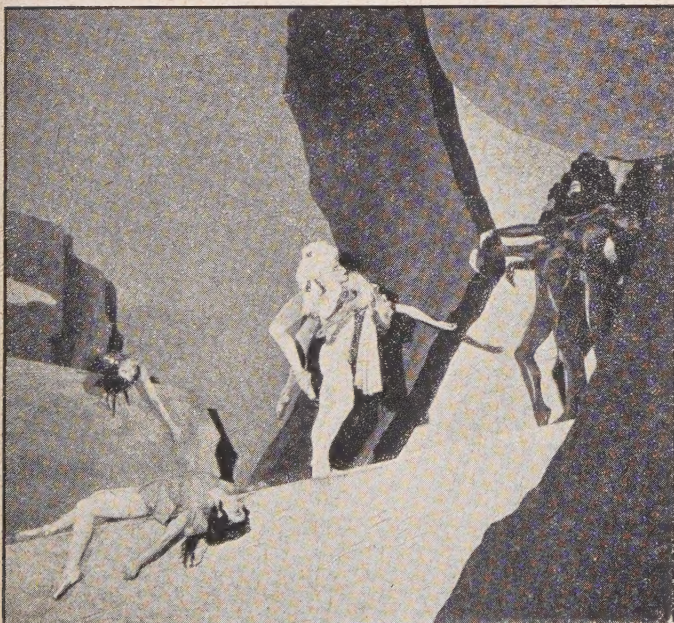
while she has little of Petit's mocking sophistication. So far we have seen few of her ballets in London, but the forthcoming season will, I believe, establish her as one of the major figures in contemporary ballet.

FIRST

Janine Charrat first came to the notice of ballet goers when she appeared as a small child of the Paris Opera in the film *La Mort du Cygne* which still remains one of the most outstanding films made about the ballet. Charrat was a child prodigy: at the age of seven she composed her first dance-scenes, *Tabou* and *Le Charmeur de Serpents*. When she was thirteen she studied under Egorova in Paris, but her first studies were not in classical ballet but in the dances of the East; and this has greatly influenced her both as a dancer and choreographer. The rigid formalism of the classical style which she learned under Egorova did not, even at that early age, satisfy her imagination.

Three years later she was working with Roland Petit, and from that meeting one might date the beginning of a new era in French ballet. For Les Ballets

"La Massacre de Amazons"



Charrat, Van Dijk in "Les Algues"

de Champs Elysees in 1945 she created *Jeu de Cartes* to Stravinski's music with a fascinating decor by Pierre Roy. It was highly musical, although dramatically confused; but this young girl still managed to excel the famous Balanchine whose ballet on the same theme is tawdry by comparison. Charrat also showed great understanding of her dancers, and gave Babilee as the Joker his finest role which suited his style to perfection.

INTENSE

Charrat then went on to create ballets for the Opera-Comique and the de Cuevas Ballet, only to rejoin Petit when he formed his Ballets de Paris in 1948. She was then not yet twenty-five years old. For him she composed *Adame Miroir* to music by Milhaud—a work for three male dancers which, although much admired in Paris, was found in London to be monotonous, tortuous and obscure. All that emerged was that Charrat could compose powerful dances for men and that her approach to choreography was both intense and rather naive. As a choreographer she has much to say and often finds great

difficulty in expressing herself; in this she is the exact opposite of Petit who usually has little to say but expresses himself with consummate ease.

In *La Femme et Son Ombre* with scenario by the great poet Paul Claudel and music by Tcherepnine, Charrat's deep understanding of Eastern dancing was superbly displayed. The Japanese legend was told in gentle, stylized movements; and Charrat herself was wonderfully expressive in the use she made of her hands and arms.

Less successful was her abstract ballet to Tchaikowski's Theme and Variations, where the fusion of Eastern gestures with classical dance technique produced a somewhat fussy and precious effect, although the work was highly musical in conception.

Charrat's activities in Paris have been extensive and have included the composition of a number of ballet films for television. In 1950 she even appeared as Giselle with the de Cuevas Company, which was a curious experiment, as her classical style is extremely mannered and not one capable of embracing a role that demands the pure classical ballerina.

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PARIS

—FERDINAND REYNA

★ At the Theatre Empire, the Ballets de Los Angeles made their debut under the direction of David Lichine. Starring in this company we find Tatiana Riabouchinska, Oleg Tupine, Nathalie Clare, Wilda Taylor and Wladimir Outhomsky whom David Lichine engaged in Paris. The rest of the company, of whom there are fifteen, emanated from David Lichine's School of Dancing in Los Angeles. The first night, programmed the following ballets: *Divertissement Venetien*—music by the 18th century composers Benedetto Marcello, and Cambrini. *Les oiseaux d'Or*, termed a child's ballet according to the programme, was set to music by Tchaikowski with decors and costumes by Nathalie Gontcharova. *Les combat des Coqs* to music by the 17th century Spanish composer P. Soler. This is a gay and witty ballet which takes place in California under Spanish occupation. The 13-year-old Mary Gelder was a great success, but this was not sufficient to arouse public enthusiasm, and at the second performance it was withdrawn.

★ The Paris Opera House have just presented a lavishly splendid and new version of Weber's *Oberon*. Decors and costumes have not been spared expense and several musical amendments have been made by introducing other compositions by Weber. The eight choreographies are arranged by Serge Lifar, Harald Lander, and Albert Aveline. The following take the principal roles: Lyane Dayde, Nina Vybroubouva, Madeleine Lafon, Nichel Renault, Josette Clavier and Jacqueline Rayer. The entire *corps de ballet* take part.

★ Making their debut at the Theatre des Champs Elysees were the Spanish dancers Suzana and Jose. The charm with which they danced the dances from Castille was of particular note, and their castanets were very melodious. The interpretations appeared to be very much more of a "personal" character than that realised by the majority of Spanish dancers who seem to abuse the flamenco-zapateado and Andalousse dances.

★ At the moment John Taras is directing the dances that will appear in the *Opera de Quatre Sous* by the composer Kurt Weill, which is taken from John Gay's *Beggars Opera*.



GERMANY

—EVA BULOW

★ Goethe's ballade *Der Zauberlehrling* (The Sorcerer's Apprentice)—a new ballet for television and film.

★ In the television studios of Hamburg-Lokstedt there was the premiere of *Der Zauberlehrling* during February to music by Professor Walter Braunfels in charge of the NWDR Television. The wonderful decors, costumes and scenarios of this fairyland were all by Hein Heckroth, unforgettable by his *Red Shoes* and *Tales of Hoffmann*. Helga Swedlund has provided the choreography and Sonia Arova in the title-role has the opportunity to display her rich talent. Other dancers who did appear included Erica Lihn, Rita van El, Sonja Crunicke, Marion Briner, Heinz Schmiedel, Claus Zimmermann, Herbert Juzek and Max Aust. The singer was Annelise Rothenberger and the NWDR orchestra conducted to delicate effect by Dr. Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. Michael Powell has made a film version in CinemaScope and it is promised that we see the production in May.

★ The plot of the famous ballade is the story of a young magician apprentice who tries the magic power in absence of his master. In the film he lets dance the cats, dolls and soldier-puppets of an enchanting world and finally a besom brings him water for a bath. Not able to stop the besom, because he forgot the magic word, he takes an axe and beats him, now not Mlakar presented *La Tragedy de* to bring the water on and on... (this scene was choreographically very weak) and only the appearance of the magician can save the situation.

★ The last great ballet evening at the State Opera Munich found a very cool press reception. The choreographers Pia and Pino Mlakar presented *La Tragedy de Salome* by Florent Schmitt, Ravel's *Bolero* and *Princess Turandot* by Gottfried von Einem. The musical direction of the evening was by Kurt Eichhorn, the decors by Helmut Jurgens.

★ *The Tragedy of Salome*, inspired by Robert d'Humieres' poem, was written in 1907 and performed in the same year at Theatre des Arts, Paris with Loie Fuller, later at the Grand Opera 1913 under Diaghilev with Ida Rubinstein.



SYDNEY

—JOHN O'BRIEN

★ The new Borovansky programme is *Les Sylphides*, *Petrouchka* and *Graduation Ball*. Unfortunately, *Sylphides* was ruined by the overseas principals.

None of these showed any feeling for the ballet or sense of its style. Their dancing was either frenzied or precariously uncertain, and all atmosphere was skilfully killed by over-lighting.

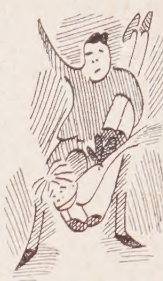
Claudie Algeranova is one of the most un-musical dancers we have yet seen, and though her balance is good, her line is ugly, and her style too rubato for *Sylphides*.

★ The less said of Raoul Celada in this ballet, the better. He looks like an ageing Coward juvenile, refuses to point his feet, lacks elevation, and conveys agonised boredom magnificently. The *corps* is extremely good, and it is unfortunate that they overshadow the principals.

★ *Petrouchka* has improved greatly in production, and is now one of the best ballets in the repertoire. In fact, it must approach world standards. Fortunately, it has not been ruined by mis-casting. Peggy Sager as the Doll, Paul Grinwis as *Petrouchka*, and Vassili Trunoff as the strongest Moor we have seen all give fine interpretations. John Auld as the Merchant, Paul Hammond as the Charlatan, Eve King as one of the Street Dancers, Tom Merrified as one of the Grooms, Ron Paul as the Head Coachman and Raymond Trickett as the Devil have all worked beautifully into their smaller roles, thus strengthening the overall effect of the ballet.

★ It is unfortunate that Borovansky has been unable to import better principals. With the exception of Vassili Trunoff they lack versatility, and are more or less strong on the chic personality side, but none are classical dancers. Therefore, with the exception of Peggy Sager, the company is now without a classical artist.

★ It is to be desired that Borovansky will again experiment, and seek material from the younger and more promising members in the *corps*. The company has been doing phenomenal business; not an empty seat since it started almost a month ago in one of Australia's largest theatres.



BARCELONA

—MONTSALVATGO

★ The Ballet of Juan Tena which was presented last month at the Calderon Theatre in Barcelona should not be judged by the results of its first performance. It is easy to find fault in a newly formed group of young dancers, dissimilar in their technical formation, and of whom only Juan Tena and Antonio Monllor really know what a stage is and how a dancer should move on it. The merit of the new ballet lies precisely in the fact that it has known how to make the most of a few elements and has realised that we are by now tired of so many small-scale versions of full-length ballets which foreign companies present every year in the Liceo.

★ Another of Juan Tena's merits is that he has given much thought to the various attractive factors which should coincide in a choreographic spectacle. What is the use of dancing to a piece of music by Prokofiev or Hindemith, if the interpreter shrouds himself in a vulgar disguise of the kind hired by the hour? What is the good of a daring costume if the wearer dances to the rhythm of a piece of music which, when not lethargic is either bad or hackneyed? And, looking at the problem with greater perspective, what is a number of good dances worth if any kind of Fire Dance is dragged in, or a poor-quality Tchaikowski waltz?

★ In the programme the dance numbers were all carefully planned and arranged so as to escape from the formulas too often seen. For this reason, I found of great interest the *Negro Spiritual* with chorus; the "Tango, chorus and waltz" from the *Story of a Soldier* by Strawinski; the Brazilian choruses and the *Circus Fantasy*, a choreographic version of an excellent score by Jaime Padros.

★ The remaining numbers were not inferior to those mentioned from the choreographic, plastic and musical points view. Juan Tena danced very well, especially in a Chopin Polonaise, to which the designer Rafael Richart gave the right evoking intensity by contrasting the red of the costume with the blues of a small decor. Equally good were Antonio Monllor, who in the character dance is the best artist we have seen for many years; and Pilar Llorens and Consolacion Villabie.



Irene SKORIK

By
Ferdinand
Reyna

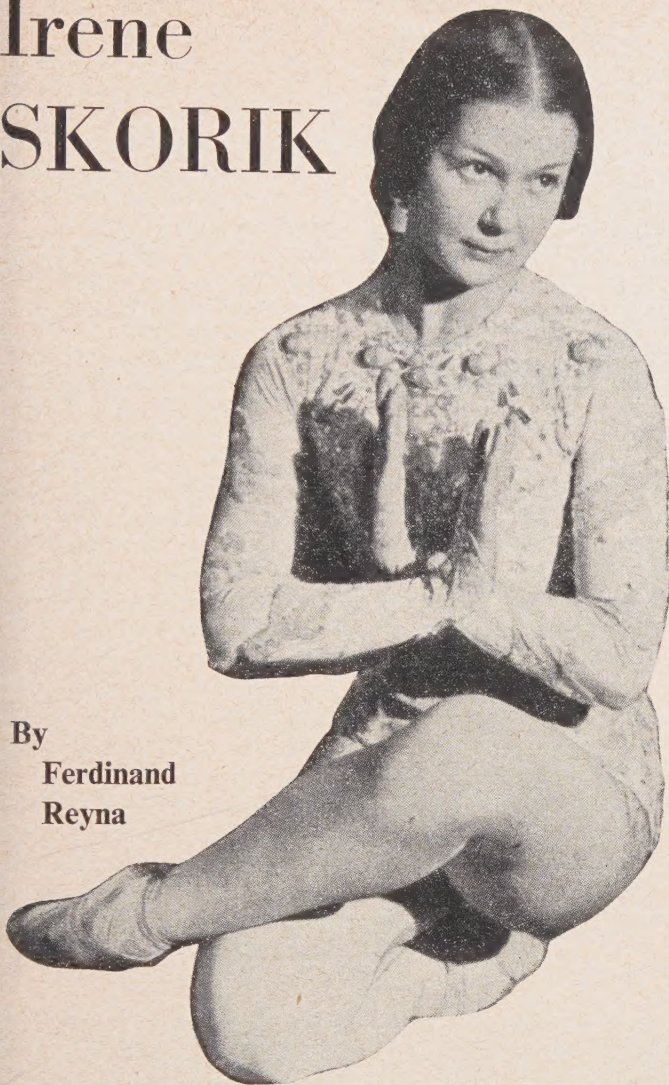


Photo: Kamalakar

IRENE SKORIK started dancing at the age of eleven with Carlotta Zambelli, and continued under Preobajenska, Gsovsky, Egorova, and Kniaeff. At that time she worked only twice a week as she was continuing her school studies.

During the war years she was in Paris studying dancing and music and appeared at various concerts that were organised by Serge Lifar. She also appeared in performances that were organised by Roland Petit with *Les Vendredi de la Danse* at the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre.

In 1944-1945 she worked and rehearsed with Lifar in the Georgian ballet *Chots Rustaveli* in which she played a part. Her first engagement of importance was with the Ballets des Champs Elysees, which she joined when the company was being formed. In October 1945 she made her debut at the Theatre des Champs Elysees in her first success *La Belle au Bois Dormant*—she danced in the first act in the “forest” scene.

Later her successes were, the Queen of Hearts in *Jeu de Cartes* by Janine Charrat, and in the Spring of 1946 she took the role of Leda in *Les Amours de Jupiter*, and also appeared in the *Fiancee du Diable*.

Then came the many “tournees” with seasons in Paris and London. She also visited various European countries, and further tours with the company took her to Egypt where she was a great success, and to Brazil. In England she danced the *pas de deux* in *La Sylphide* receiving the Taglioni medal. Other appearances were at the Edinburgh Festival, and in Italy.

In March 1950 she left the Champs Elysees Ballet Company

which broke up shortly afterwards, and became known as the “Artistes Associes”. In June 1950 she went to Palestine. Meanwhile she danced for two weeks in *Carmen* with Roland Petit’s Ballet de Paris.

This was followed by an engagement with the “Biennale de Venise”. Later she entered the Opera at Munich, which was directed by Victor Gsovsky during the 1950-1951, and 1951-1952 season. With this troupe she gave a series of dances at the Opera in Rome, and twice danced at Bayreuth.

Her outstanding roles were Potiphar in *La Legende de Joseph* by R. Strauss, and above all Ophelia, in *Hamlet*, not forgetting *Cinderella*. On her return in 1952, and then in 1953, she gave a series of important galas with Serge Lifar, Nina Voroubova and Youli Algaroff. In the Summer of 1953 she appeared as a star in *Psyche* the opera-ballet by Lulli-Moliere, presented at the Theatre des Champs Elysees in Paris.

Lastly, and recently, in Munich she magnificently interpreted the role of Turandot a new ballet by the composer Gottfried von Heine—choreographer Pinot Mlaker. Her greatest success in Munich is in Prokofieff’s *Cinderella* choreography by Victor Gsovsky.

Now she is the ballerina of George Kirsta’s new Ballet Comique, touring Britain.

David Lichine in Paris: The Reasons Behind the Failing

THE Los Angeles Ballets brought over from America by David Lichine had their one and only performance in Paris at the beginning of March. Let us first of all make it quite clear, that this failure, has in no way affected this choreographer’s reputation. This “lost battle” is in no way due to his choreographies, but more or less to the lack of sufficient rehearsing with the company who in themselves were not so poor.

There were two stage-falls during the first-night performance; these occurrences cause the public much amusement, but are indeed fatal for the production.

The ballets were badly chosen,

and a faulty repertoire on a first night can ruin the whole company (as we have seen) and one can rarely make up for such mistakes afterwards.

The most extraordinary part of it all is the fact that the press did not give such a bad coverage.

We also know, and think, that David Lichine was not sufficiently “backed-up” by the company who seemed to have lost interest. The decors and costumes were not up to standard, and on this point alone, Paris is a very hard critic!

What happened was not David Lichine’s fault, but just an accumulation of unfortunate circumstances. However, David

Lichine has not lost courage, and he intends taking his “revenge”.

DIAGHILEV

A new book has just been published by the Editions du Rocher (Monaco) written entirely in French and by Serge Lifar, on the life of Serge Diaghilev. This has also been published in various other languages.

NIJINSKA

Madame Felia Doubrovska has succeeded Madame Bronislava Nijinska as Ballet Mistress, in the Marquis de Cuevas Ballet. She formerly danced with Diaghilev.

AGAIN

Under Maria Feres’s inspira-

tion, opera-ballet is going to be revived in Paris, and as before, we shall again see choreographic and lyrical art combined. Several young composers have been invited to collaborate: Marcel Delannoy, Henri Dutilleux, and Marius Constant included.

OPERA

At the end of April, the Paris Opera will present Rene Dumesnil’s ballet, *Nauteos*—choreography by Serge Lifar, and music by Jeanne Leleu. Decors by Yves Brayer. The principal roles will be interpreted by Yvette Chauvire, Madeleine Lafon, and Michel Renault.

IT is encouraging for the provincial ballet-goer to see that London circles are beginning to appreciate the necessity for keeping the life-blood of ballet circulating in the provinces. To this end **BALLET TODAY**, in its January article, pointed in the right direction, and one must agree with Mr. Purslow's letter in the February issue in which he welcomes it, and with his proffered solution—the formation of small ballet companies in the larger cities.

Perhaps, however, the view that “in this country all ballet roads lead to London, with no inbetween creative centres” is just a little too pessimistic. The work of Tyneside Ballet Workshop has recently been mentioned in these pages, and there may be other small pockets of activity in other places which only require some slight encouragement to make them more noticeable.

PURPOSE

At any rate, it is my purpose, writing from Glasgow, to make it plain that here, at least, the situation is by no means entirely negative. The fact is that



By D. K. Cameron

Scotland has a ballet company which is capable of presenting professional programmes (the last was in the Glasgow Theatre Royal last Autumn), and which is due to undertake an American tour next August.

This is the Celtic Ballet Company, founded by Margaret Morris, whose name is well known internationally in connection with the free dance style which she has developed and which is taught in the Margaret Morris Movement's School in Glasgow.

This Company seeks to give expression to Scottish folk-tradition in its work. Of course,

this form of ballet is not to everyone's taste and, while support for the Company has been far from negligible, there are nevertheless many more traditionally-minded ballet-lovers who have remained unimpressed by the work of the Celtic Ballet. Those responsible for the direction of the movement have been conscious of this for some time and have reasoned, as London ballet opinion is now doing, that it is necessary to promote and maintain a general interest in ballet if there is to be an audience at all to attract to new work of any kind.

RESULT

The result of their deliberations is that a club has been inaugurated. It will be known as the Celtic Ballet Club, but its connection with the Company will be purely nominal. As Miss Morris herself put it at the inaugural meeting, “My Company of course, will continue its work on the basis of our own free dance style, but I visualise in addition a club which can be a meeting-ground for enthusiasts for all forms of ballet—indeed for all forms of dancing”.

There can be no doubt that the move is a wise one. The Celtic Ballet Company is bound to gain strength from the new people who will be attracted to their form of work, and enough dancers, musicians, potential choreographers, etc. may come together to make it possible to form a Glasgow Ballet Workshop in the very near future.

It would be good to see both these results developing from the Celtic Ballet Club, and to see similar initiative shown in other parts of the British Isles.

It remains for **BALLET TODAY** and other forces “at the centre of things” to encourage, publicise and support such ventures, which will be beneficial to all of us whose aim, at this stage, is more—and still more—ballet.

**all
roads
don't
lead
to
London**



What can the audience do for Ballet?

By SUSAN LESTER

A LONDON audience is, by necessity, a very different proposition to its provincial sister. That does not necessarily mean that their tastes or demands differ but, for economic reasons, London gets the lion's share.

We all sympathise with the ardent ballet-goer living in the provinces, who does not see as much ballet as he would wish.

But his fervour is not shared as avidly by a great percentage of the provincial audience who can, and only want, to take a certain type of ballet at infrequent intervals.

And it is their money that managements need.

True, the provincial audience pays into the funds from which certain ballet companies derive subsidies, but the higher per-

centage of people regularly supporting various dance events and the fact that it has a responsibility as a capital of the dance, make it not too unreasonable that London should have this lion's share.

Companies tour the large provincial centres as much as possible, although as Ninette de Valois once said, it is not always possible to produce the well-

loved classics on the London scale, and if this meant giving a shoddy production, her company would entirely omit such ballets.

The big American tours which are regarded with disfavour by many here, are quite another matter. No doubt the organisers, who are anxious for American dollars, will say that such tours promote Anglo-American relations, which is to the benefit of every tax-payer!

It all boils down to the type and number of an audience. Many people in the provinces who will go to ballet, will probably support every other event that comes to their local theatre, local cinema and horticultural hall. This is not the case in London, where money comes for longer periods, in larger proportions, for specific forms of pass-time.

SATISFIED?

Why should a public do anything to help ballet?

This often heard request jars on the ear. Theatre-goers especially in London, are paying high West-End prices to see something of their choice. Apart from the common courtesy of arriving on time and behaving in the auditorium, the onus is on everyone else, from the theatre staff to the artists.

If he—the theatre-goer—is dissatisfied, he is often told that no one is forcing him to come again! If he is a thinking man, he would probably withdraw his support. If there were more people like him, there would probably be a marked improvement in theatrical offerings.

If the man is unsympathetic and determined to be difficult, to which all theatre-folk are well accustomed, that is unfortunate.

CLUBS HELP

The purpose of ballet clubs is again very different in London to the provinces. Their purpose, contrary to much belief, is not to be "fan" groups.

They are a body of people who feel sufficiently intensely about dancing to wish to achieve the closest possible contact with it from every legitimate angle—in order to promote its interests. In some ways, the tasks of the provincial club are of greater value than in London. For, in London, the public exists in stronger numbers. It is for the fervent few (comparatively) outside London to skilfully act as missionaries and create a public, or increase it. They can thus approach their theatre managers with greater confidence and help to increase the chances of getting more and better ballet in their town.

In London, the purpose is to nurture that vital link between



RAJPUT

DANCER

● This is one of the fifty colour sketches in the exhibition of the work of Joss which is to be held at the Leger Galleries in Old Bond Street from June 1. A confirmed Comet-traveller (B.O.A.C. provides a built-in easel for him) Joss spends a part of each year in the Near and Far East to produce such drawings as this.



HOW I Became a Ballet Dancer. By Peggy Van Praagh. (Nelson, 5s.)

I do not think anyone could be better qualified than Peggy Van Praagh, Assistant Director of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, to write on this subject for, besides being an experienced and gifted teacher, she has had practical knowledge of every side of ballet life. She has danced in music-halls, in cabaret and musical comedy and in opera-ballet at Covent Garden. Her first created role was in Tudor's *Jardin aux Lilas*, and she danced in the Carmago Society, the Ballet Club and Ballet Rambert before joining the Wells. She has known the many vicissitudes that await the dancer outside the shelter of the big permanent company.

Her early training was faulty, and because of certain physical limitations she never expected to achieve more than soloist roles,

but she ended her dancing career with a flourish by dancing Swanhilda in *Coppelia*. She gave up dancing when Ninette de Valois invited her to become ballet mistress of the junior company, then forming after the war, with its full charge when on tour.

Peggy Van Praagh's considerable experience gives the utmost value to her discussion of the various points to be considered when deciding on a ballet career; and her advice on teachers and schools, and the openings available for the fully fledged dancer, answers these ever-present questions.

It has become usual nowadays to stress the drudgery of ballet training, the sacrifice it entails, and the uncertain material rewards that await all but the fortunate few. Peggy Van Praagh does not gloss over this, but she also makes it clear that even for the most humble member of the *corps de ballet*, the life is one of infinite variety, colour, and interest, and in the joy of movement, sense of comradeship, and satisfaction in creating something of great beauty, the dancer is well rewarded.

P. C.

The New Ballet Today

BALLET has existed under various commercial or non-commercial guises, as a lush oddity for the masses and as a heat-reared artifice for the coenobite.

Today ballet is a part of the welfare state, with only a few off-shoots showing private enterprise. But few states go on supporting ballet for long, just as few courts retained their dancers when son took the place of father. By the time ballet loses its state patronage, will we have learned the lesson?

The lesson is that one central home of ballet reaches a peak and then grudgingly degenerates. Long before degeneration sets in the country should have given scope to smaller, less overhead burdened companies who can both carry tradition and work experimentally.

So far this has not been done.

SCOTLAND

In this issue a new contributor, D. K. Cameron, writes under the heading "All Roads Don't Lead to London". If we can suggest a text for the headline: once all roads did lead to Rome, and history gives the result.

So far both Glasgow and Birmingham have been represented in this running argument on the possibilities for provincial chamber ballet. So far, too, BALLET TODAY has been the sole voice (as it so often is) in this feeler for out-of-London dance potential.

Is there more provincial activity which we are yet to report? We would like to know.



PIANO Concerto No. 3 (Prokofiev). Piano Concerto No. 3 (Bartok). Katchen (piano), Suisse Romande Orch. (Ansermet). Decca LXT 2894.

Janine Charrat used the Prokofiev for her ballet, *Concerto*, at the Opera Comique in '47; but it is the first movement that the balletgoer remembers most readily being the opening scene of *Gala Performance*. Do not let the Bartok frighten you—it is lyrical in approach and Katchen plays both concertos beautifully. Recording good.

Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra and *Interludes* from *Peter Grimes* (Britten). Concertgebouw Orch. (Beinum. Decca LXT 2886.

To the *Young Person's Guide*, Robbins set himself the task in *Fanfare*, of grouping his dancers according to the instruments of the orchestra and deservedly met with success. The movements for the percussion were delightfully ludicrous, whereas the *pas de deux* of the violas was enchanting. This record should please everyone—it is good from every point of view, including the reverse side.

Scheherazade (Rimsky-Korsakov). Belgian Radio S. O. (Andre). Telefunken LGX 66018.

What colour both Bakst and Fokine saw in this marvel of orchestration! With broad sweeps and careful shading, Andre brings from the orchestra a fine performance, which held my interest and imagination to the last bar. The soloists are clear and round, and the recording good.

Death and the Maiden Quartet (Schubert). Vienna Philharmonic Quartet. Telefunken LGX 66016.

Though of her earlier days, this is one of Andree Howard's most sensitive ballets but not easy to cast as it needs a dancer of delicate feeling and personality—how much Sally Gilmour is missed! This disc is good both as to interpretation and recording except for a little hardness at times from the first violin and unfortunately the second movement, which concerns us most, carries over onto the second side. I prefer the *Amadeus* String Quartet on HMV. ALP 1088.

Daphnis and Chloe, Suites 1 and 2, and *Alborada del Gracioso* (Ravel). Chorale Marcel Briclot and French Radio National Orch. (Cluytens). Columbia 33CX1134.

The two suites, by-and-large, cover Ashton's ballet, which gave us such superb dancing from Fonteyn in the Pirate's scene. I can thoroughly recommend Cluytens's beautiful handling of the chorus and orchestra. The *Aubade* of a Buffoon will recall the splendid dancing in a different genre, by Alberto Lorca when the Pilar Lopez Ballet visited London last year. Recording excellent.

Les Sylphides (Chopin). *Carnival* (Schumann). Royal Opera House Orchestra (Irving). HMV CLP 1013.

Irving's tempi here are nearer those used in the theatre than any other conductor's, making this a dancer's and balletgoer's record. The coupling of two of the loveliest ballets in today's repertoire gives you the best possible value for your money—I am sure this will be a most popular record.

B. C.

June
Ryan



text

by

PIGEON
CROWLE

VIOLETTA ELVIN

VIOLETTA ELVIN returns to Covent Garden on May 21, in Ballet Imperial, and her many admirers will rejoice that this gifted and lovely ballerina is dancing again. For Violetta Elvin will be the occasion to which all her hopes and energies have been directed since that day, six months ago, when she was left in a Vancouver hospital while the rest of the Sadler's Wells Ballet continued their tour.

A badly torn muscle compelled her to lie for several weeks with her leg in plaster. During her slow recovery she was often beset with doubt and despair. Worst of all was the feeling of isolation, of being completely out of the world of ballet. She says that during those dreary days she found her greatest help in the sympathy and encouragement of friends, known and unknown, who visited her in hospital and wrote from all over the world.

But she sorely missed her public: for in their approbation and pleasure she lives and finds that stimulus by which her art increases. She dances for their sake as well as for her own. The nervousness

she feels before a performance is caused by her great desire not to fail in giving to the full all that is expected of her, for she has a deep sense of responsibility towards all who have come to see her.

She has chosen Ballet Imperial for her return because it is one of the most difficult of the one-act ballets, and she feels it is the best test of her preparedness for return to the theatre. But her excitement and pleasure on May 21 will be tempered by the fear of disappointing an audience seeing her afresh after a long absence, and expecting a performance that will surpass their recollections of her.

She need not fear.

On such an occasion it is the artist and not the technician that matters. If Violetta Elvin can still take the stage with authority, and style and with her own special attributes of personality and charm, there will be no feeling of disappointment when her many friends bid her welcome home.



Dressed in a snowflake white gown and an ermine cape, Mme. Tcherina is the centre of attention at the party which was attended by more than 300 guests.

Mr. and Mrs. William Hollingsworth (Sara Shane) and Jack Palance who portrays Attila the Hun in Sign of the Pagan, with Tcherina.

Grace Kelly, Jeff Chandler, were prominent among the



Ludmilla Tcherina

SHORTLY after her arrival in the film city a reception was held in Ludmilla Tcherina's honour in the Crystal Room of the Beverly Hills Hotel by M. Raoul Bertrand, the French Consul General in Los Angeles. Miss Tcherina, who has won recognition from the French Government for her work in popularising the French ballet throughout the world, was given an enthusiastic welcome by leaders of the Los Angeles French colony, prominent members of society and leading industrial figures.

Young stars Lance Fuller and Kathleen Hughes get acquainted with Tcherina who was recently chosen as one of the world's five most beautiful women.

*and producer Albert J. Cohen
ing for the Tcherina party.*



*Rock Hudson, Corinne Calvert and Julia Adams have a word with
Ludmilla Tcherina.*



Ballet Diary

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

- April 29: *Veneziana* (Beriosova),
Giselle (Fonteyn)
May 1: Mat. *Veneziana*, *Checkmate*, *Homage*
3: *Patineurs*, *Shadow*,
Homage (Fonteyn,
Nerina, Jackson)
5: *Lac Des Cygnes*
(Fonteyn/Somes)
7: *Checkmate*, *Homage*,
Patineurs (Fonteyn,
Nerina)
8: Mat. *Lac Des Cygnes*
(Nerina/Rassine);
Eve. *Lac* (Jackson/Field)
10: *Coppelia* (Navarre/-
Boulton)
15: Mat. *Sleeping Beauty*
(Fonteyn/Somes);
Eve. *Sleeping Beauty*
(Nerina/Rassine)
18: *Coppelia* (Beriosova/-
Chatfield)
21: *Shadow*, *Ballet*
Imperial, *Tiresias*
(Fonteyn and return of
Elvin)
22: Mat. *Coppelia* (Berio-
sova/Chatfield). No
evening ballet.

Soviet Dancers

April 28: A three week season
is being presented by Daubeny
at the Stoll of a group of fifty

Soviet dancers and musicians.
These will include the Beryozka
ensemble, formed several years
ago from inside the Moscow
Bolshoi school.

Ballet Comique

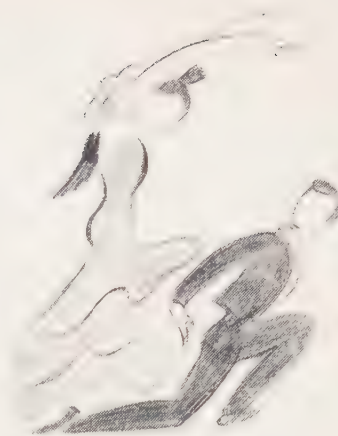
- April 26: Liverpool Royal
Court
May 3: Blackpool Grand
10: Leeds Grand
17: Edinburgh Kings
24: Glasgow Kings
31: Oxford New
June 14: Newcastle Royal
21: Bournemouth Pavilion
28: Manchester Opera
House

Ballet Rambert

- May 17: Oxford Playhouse
31: Battersea Park Theatre
June 7: Battersea Park Theatre
14: Sadler's Wells Theatre
21: Sadler's Wells Theatre
28: Windsor Theatre Royal

Contemporary Dance Theatre

Vera Goldman, the Israeli
dancer, and Geraldine Stevenson,
from the "Art of Movement"
studio, will appear on May 17
and the British Dance Theatre
group will also be on the pro-
gramme. The curtain time is
advanced from 7.30 and is now
8.0 p.m.



The Soviet Season in Paris

HERE is the official pro-
gramme for the Soviet
Ballet Season in Paris.

First of all, *Romeo and Juliette*
by Prokofiev, choreography by
Lavrovsky, created in Moscow
in 1940. The following dancers:
Galina Ulanova, with Sergueiev,
Bregvadze and Guerbrek.

This will be followed by
Cinderella Prokofiev's ballet under
the direction of Constantin Ser-
gueiev, with Nathalie
Doudinskaya, *The Fountain* by
Baktchisarai, music by Boris
Asafiev book by Nicolas
Volkov, with Ulanova, Alla
Shelest, and Sergueiev. Choro-
graphy by Rotislav Zakharov.

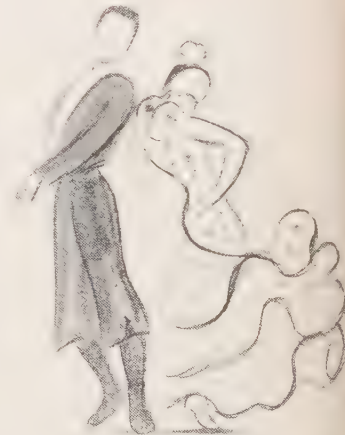
Also in this programme, will
be *Le Cavalier de Bronze* a ballet
taken from a tale by Pushkin,
with music by Reyold Gliere.

and choreography by Zakharov;
supported by Doudinskaya, the
young dancer Ninel Kourgapkina
and Sergueiev.

Various fragments from other
ballets will also be given. In this
way we shall see *The Flame of*
Paris music by Boris Assiev, book
by Nicolas Volkov, choreography
by Vainonen. *The Red Poppy* by
Gliere, from the book by
Kourilko and d'Ermolaiev,
choreography by Zakharov; *Le*
Lac des Cygnes by Tchaikowski,
starring Doudinskaya or Mois-
seieva. *Don Quixote* by Munkous.
Giselle and *Gayane* the ballet by
Aran Khatchaturian, under the
direction of Madame Anissimova,
from which George Skibine has
taken *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*
for the de Cuevas Ballet.

Under the direction of Con-
stantin Sergueiev, the Soviet
troupe will consist of about sixty
artists, mainly from the Kirov
Theatre in Leningrad and the
Grand Theatre, Moscow.

● Drawings—by Jean Target—
of Susana and Jose, appearing
in Paris.



Herida May and Malcolm Hughes rehearsing Peter Darrell's *The*
Fountain, caught in off-focus by photographer Peter Grueon. The
pianist: Tom Wade. The company: Ballet Comique.

My Picture of the Month by Serge Lido

EACH month **BALLET TODAY** will publish the photograph
taken by Lido which he considers his finest of that month.

This month Lido has chosen his shot of Alicia Markova and
Milorad Miskovitch and the photograph appears on the cover.

The dancers were caught during a rehearsal for their current
British tour which ended at the Albert Hall on April 15. "This
action picture," writes Serge Lido, "shows the immaterial lightness
of Markova and is the first one of her with her new partner
Miskovitch."

In Ballet *Today*

PART THREE

E

Leslie Edwards, a Sadler's Wells soloist, began like so many English dancers with Madame Rambert. He has been a dancer with Sadler's Wells almost from his company's inception.

Andre Eglevsky, born in Moscow in 1917 but a naturalized American for many years, has danced with de Basil, Rene Blum, Ballet Theatre, Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo and many other companies.

David Ellis, better known for his direction of London's Ballet Workshop, was a dancer with Rambert and has several works of

his own choreographing on record.

Violetta Elvin was trained at the Bolshoi in Moscow, starting at eight and a half. Only nine years later she danced ballerina roles at the ballet and opera theatre in Tashkent. She first appeared as a soloist with the Bolshoi itself in Moscow during 1943. Since arriving in Britain and joining Sadler's Wells she has had roles created for her, in *Ballabile* and *Veneziana* and she dances *Lac*, *Giselle*, *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, etc. Away from the Wells she partnered Dolin during Markova's forced absence, and has made film appearances, latterly in *Melba*.

Angna Enters is an American dancer, mainly resident in California, who was last seen in London (her first appearance here was in the '20s) several years ago at the Mercury. Miss Enters has a long career charted in various spheres and, on stage, mimes, dances, choreographs, decorates, costumes, talks, and bakes confectionary for her audiences to eat.

Vincente Escudero partnered Argentina and was to partner Pavlowa at one time. One of the greatest of Spanish dancers he has just emerged from poverty-struck retirement and is to teach again in Paris.

F

Julia Farron is a Sadler's Wells soloist who dances in *Coppelia*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Rake's Progress*, etc.

Jose Ferran, a dancer with the Ballet de Paris de Roland Petit. Now in Hollywood to make *The Glass Slipper* with Leslie Caron for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Margot Fonteyn, prima ballerina assoluta of Sadler's Wells Ballet, is perhaps the most versatile of ballerinas. She has danced in a wide range of ballets and created roles of vastly divergent content. Born in 1919 she began her career with the Wells (she has only left the company for brief guest appearances since then) in 1934. Fonteyn replaced Markova with the Wells and has danced in *Rio Grande*, *Giselle*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Lac*, *Coppelia*, *Casse*, *Sylphides*, *Spectre*, *Carnaval*, *Apparitions*, *Les Patineurs*, *Horoscope*, *Dante Sonata*, *Facade*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Wedding Bouquet*, *Rendezvous*, *Wise Virgins*, *Sirenes*, *Comus*, *Hamlet*, *Les Demoiselles de la Nuit* (this with Roland Petit), *Cinderella*, *Sylvia*, *Daphnis and Chloe*, etc.

Celia Franka had danced with Rambert, International and the Wells and became known for her choreography before she settled in Canada to direct ballet there.

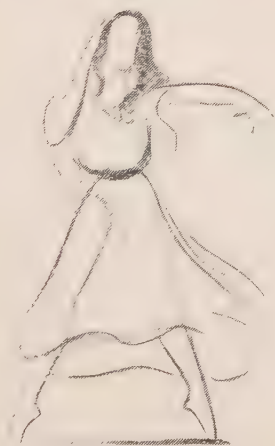
Frederic Franklin, born in Liverpool, danced with various companies in Britain before touring overseas and settling in the United States where, partnering Slavenska and with Danilova, he recently toured Japan.

Janine Charrat — From Page Five

COMPANY

At the end of 1951 she decided to form her own company which gave its first performance at Grenoble, her birthplace; and, after a visit to Cannes, opened in Paris in January 1952. Members of the Company included Ethery Pagava (well-known to London audiences for her superb performance in Balanchine's *Night Shadow* for the de Cuevas Ballet), Rene Bon and Claire Sombert. All the ballets were by herself and included *Le Massacre des Amazones* and also *Une Etrangere a Paris* in which Paul Draper, the American tap-dancer whose recitals are so popular in London, took part.

Later she composed *Les Algues* which used spoken dialogue and told the story of a young man who joins his beloved in a



—drawing by TARGET

lunatic asylum in a vain attempt to share her insane world. *Jour et Nuit* to an excerpt from Tchaikowski's *Serenade* was based on the theme of the struggle between good and evil.

Although these and other ballets have been given a mixed reception in Paris, there is little doubt about the importance of her work, however much it may vary in quality. She may at times be mannered and over-subtle, obscure and pretentious; but she is a genuine choreographer—by that I mean an artist who conceives a ballet in terms of her own images and not, as is so often the case, in modifications of classroom *enchainement*. The first visit of Janine Charrat's company to London may well be as stimulating as was that of Roland Petit eight years ago; it cannot be ignored by anyone interested in the future of French ballet.

The season opened during April and will be reviewed in the next issue.

R. AUSTIN



Theme:

Modern Dance

A Tape Recorded
argument between
Peter Craig-Raymond
and
A. V. Coton

PC-R: The point raised by what examples of modern dance we see in London is—a future for modern dance? Is there one?

AVC: I suspect you mean that modern dance has a distant past, a not-very-obvious present, and you don't see much hope of a future. Modern doesn't have the same glamorous appeal as ballet (and ballet is glamorous, eye-filling, pictorially effective by its nature): it started with Isadora Duncan's single-handed revolt against the decadence that had come over Ballet at that time, over fifty years ago.

PC-R: Exactly. It filled a vacuum, sat back on a self-satisfied dais in its tiny initiate circle and has not moved since. So today we do not have modern dance as something more free, more mobile than classical ballet but, in fact, a museum piece of the 20's often more time-restrained than ballet technique.

AVC: That view may apply to a lot of European modern dance; it isn't true in America. I agree that people find difficulty (at first) in getting much out of modern dance—but, then, it is different from ballet. Its function is as dance-drama. Ballet too, uses dramatic subjects, but still is effective mainly as something visually satisfying. A ballet

can fail because no one knows whether it was meant to be a drama or a picture of beautiful movements; most advances in ballet's history come from the struggle between the two ideas—whether form (choreography, dance-style) or content (story, atmosphere, etc.), should be the dominant thing.

PC-R: But the fact is that modern dance, in too many instances, is more restrained, conventional and technically rigid than classic ballet. Ballet has absorbed what effects of modern dance it can reorient, such choreographers as Balanchine, Gene Kelly, Jack Cole, Jerome Robbins, Agnes de Mille and a few more have both classic and modern dance technique at finger-point and can make effects with modern dance ideas while working firmly on a full grounding in classical technique. So ballet has not gone oblivious to modern dance but has, in fact, incorporated some of the thinking of the modern dance school. One example—modern dance used Americana as its entry point in the United States. Since then "folksy" choreography has taken its place in ballet and, with ballet, in the modern musical. So ballet took a shot in the arm from modern dance and superseded its injector, even in a field originated by modern dance.

AVC: I cannot accept that: Balanchine and those others have not all digested modern dance's methods and ideas. Modern isn't aimless, freak movements; it is a way of using the body differently from the ballet way. Don't forget we have had what can be called "the ballet idea" in our cultural background for three or four centuries; modern dance began only fifty years ago. What do you imagine ballet looked like when it was a mere fifty years old, as a new kind of theatre? Regarding your last point: some classical choreographers have studied modern dance and can use certain of its ideas and styles. And is it not because modern dance is so new and belongs so clearly to our century that it seems harsh and stark compared with ballet—particularly while ballet is going through its contemporary revival and has won such fantastic popularity?

PC-R: Several points there, A.V., first this "stark". Why need modern dance have so bitter, hard and inturnd a starting-point to almost its every conception? And, as to young choreographers, taking it that they are restricted by classical ballet technique and want to work through modern dance—where is their stage in this country? In
To page 19

ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT



FREED'S FAMOUS BALLET SHOES

AS WORN BY
LEADING DANCERS

Margot **FONTEYN**

Violetta **ELVIN**

Moir **SHEARER**

Pamela **MAY**

Svetlana **BERIOVA**

Rowena **JACKSON**

Anne **HEATON**

Patricia **MILLER**



AND MANY OTHERS

THROUGHOUT THE
WORLD

Yvette **CHAUVIRE**

Nathalie **LESLIE**

Celia **FRANCA**

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Ballet Digest

THE *Eastern Daily Press* produced one of those gems of ballet criticism last month. The paper's critic, Basil Maine,

praised the dancing of Louise Carley as Coppelia. Maryon Lane must be careful—someone is upstaging her.

ALICIA MARKOVA may dance in Israel if she accepts an invitation from the Israel Philharmonic, with whom she has appeared in New York.

GLASGOW'S Celtic Ballet will open at the Jacob's Pillow Festival in Lee, Massachusetts on July 25. A Canadian tour with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra is also being negotiated.

ODDEST ballet photograph of the month was in the *Daily Sketch*. This paper's photographer caught a scene with six dancers appearing in a pub with comedian Jimmy Wheeler who owned the hostelry.

ACCORDING to the Roman Catholic weekly, *Universe*, ballet dancers could easily find employment as laundresses if they wished, so capable are they with travelling irons. And, according to an Equity report (April 25, a.g.m.) they might be better paid, too. The report says a subsidy is almost vital to ballet existence, but not the complete answer: "Even in those companies which are subsidised, such as the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, the salaries are disgracefully low. There seems no reason, for example, why a principal dancer should get little more than a chorister in a West End show. Ballet, remains one of the most romantic, satisfying and ill-paid branches of the profession".

"It is a great shame," the report declares, "that the resources of the Arts Council are so inadequate in relation to the need and compared with subsidies enjoyed by ballet and opera in other civilised countries".

AFTER Deaths and Entrances I long for Lives and Exits . . . *Appalachian Spring* seems very long". Sidney Harrison reviewing the Martha Graham season for *John O'London's*.

"Though death be poor, it ends a mortal woe." William Shakespeare.

"Graham is like Bedlam. It may be necessary to have it, but I feel it wrong to admit the public to watch the suffering." Peter Craig-Raymond in a lecture.

THE London Ballet Circle presented a selection of films highlighted by a Rene Clair excerpt, a McLaren colour short and a series of test shots made by Pavlova for the United Artists studio in 1924. These Pavlova films should prove ruinous to Pavlova's reputation and certainly answer the fools who compare today's ballerinas

to "dear Anna". I suggest young dancers invest in copies of the film and run it through everytime a greybearded pundit fogs his eyes and begins: "Ah, but you should have seen . . ." Only in one of the tests does Pavlova come over as a warm, human and "big" personality—and that is the non-dancing one. A. V. Coton introduced the films and was responsible, with the London Ballet Circle, for their selection.

SO sick was New York's *Herald Tribune* with "best ten" popularity polls that he invited readers to list their most "tedious five" from acknowledged masterpieces. The most boring five in the poll were *Scheherazade* (Rimsky-Korsakov), *Symphony in D Minor* (Franck), *Bolero* (Ravel), *Parsifal* (Wagner) and *Missa Solemnis* (Beethoven). Interesting that the first three have been used for ballet.

IN Paramount's *Red Garters* dance director Nick Castle has mixed de Mille - Americana choreography with pseudo-Spanish patterns to produce an unusual and effective number, Vanquero. There are several dance numbers of interest in the film and, for added interest, this film on Hollywood's oldest theme—the wild west—has been set in a fantasy "open" decor, a mere skeleton of normal set decoration. With deliberately intensified Technicolor, the effect is certainly unusual and, I think, excellent. It is good to see experiment, even if belated, and for Hollywood to double-deal its favourite bread-and-butter fiction is brave indeed. I found it enjoyable.

JOSEPHINE GORDON (pictured here) is now a soloist with Kirsta's Ballet Comique. Last seen in BALLET TODAY when dancing at the Player's Theatre, Josephine Gordon has been with the Wells, Metropolitan, St. James's, the Empire Theatre and Theatre Arts companies and appeared on television. Also pictured here is Patricia Karen, the young London dancer who has more or less taken up residence in Brussels and is having a worthwhile success there.

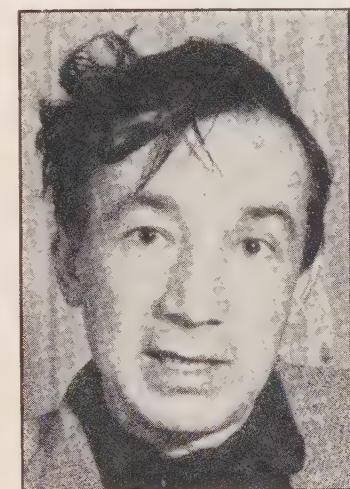
BALLET COMIQUE announced their premier danseur for the tour during the coming months. He is Bjorn Holmgren of the Swedish ballet.

ISTVAN RABOVSKY, husband and partner of Norah Kovach, is to portray Nijinski in a Hollywood biofilm of the Russian dancer. Work on the film, long in planning, will commence late this year.

To page 23



JOSEPHINE GORDON



DAVID LICHINE



PATRICIA KAREN

What the Audience can do for Ballet?

From page 9

artists and audience in every way. All clubs have a common factor in attempting to inform as much as possible. Just as the critic's function is to guide public taste, the club can broaden the artistic outlook to cover the scenic and musical aspects of dancing.

To achieve their aims, clubs can run classes, lectures, film programmes, social events and possibly, with skill and care, an evening's ballet. The writer personally feels that this last activity can be used with greater effect in the provinces, where combined with a simple authoritative talk by a good lecturer, many misconceptions could be exploded and new ideas and appreciations stimulated.

In London, where opportunities to see dancing are greater, these performances would be less effective, although there is no denying that there is ample room for the stimulation of ideas and the dismissal of prejudice!

In running a club in central London, organisers are doubly appreciative of the difficulties of artists, managements and impresarios. With so much dancing and other theatre events, there is the constant effort to make the best and most enterprising use of the available material, the high costs, the worry of catching someone to speak who "may" be in London.

A rewarding factor is that so many artists appreciate the value of the clubs and give their time to them. The club certainly can do something for ballet. Here both sides of the footlights can meet—not because they "should" but because they want to.

TO PROMOTE

Which raises the point: does such a serious approach from the ballet club destroy ballet's primary function—to entertain.

No, it does not.

The dictionary defines entertainment as "to occupy agreeably". The aims of clubs are to sharpen every aspect of the intellect and the emotions, in order that the soul may be affected in just that way.

We are all affected differently. This makes the intangible pursuit of understanding dancing so very much more worthwhile!



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ther words—if classical technique restricts, doesn't the lack of working stage restrict even more?

AVC: First point: I'd like to fix my own attitude to all this. I like any kind of dancing that's good for theatre. You can enjoy Bach as well as Mozart, Beethoven and many others, though they're all working things out in different ways. And you can enjoy several kinds of dancing and choreography which are all different: Fonteyn, Grey, Kaye are fine and so are Graham Cullig, Weidmann, de Mosa—in a different way.

If a classical choreographer sees that modern ideas are usable, well, he can study them; there are plenty of good teachers. Every time I've known a classical dancer try out modern dance movements, they always get something out of the experience;

Futures: Modern Dance

its own movement quality, its fluidity, is good for them. There is a stage in London for modern dance people, rather similar to Ballet Workshop; both places ought to allow experiments by both sorts of choreographers.

PC-R: In other words you see modern dance as a new root, a new technique for use inside ballet, not as a separate art form on its own?

AVC: I hope I see modern dance as both a new root and as something that can give valuable things to a good choreographer working in the older system. It is already proved as an art-form in its own right; since Duncan's time, Europe has brought up such creative choreographers as Jooss and Cullberg while America has bred Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, who have all

made dance-works which are effective theatrically. They can move an audience, they have dramatic quality, they each have their own kind of aesthetic appeal.

PC-R: What extra scope or audience appeal does modern dance technique give the classical ballet-proficient dancer or choreographer?

AVC: No extra, but different: to generalise, we can say that the best modern dance systems use the dancers' bodies in a three-dimensional way (which, incidentally, mime-actors have been doing for thousands of years). All ballet's developments have grown, through thousands of ingenious, sweaty experiments into a method which uses mainly and most emphatically only two dimensions, height and width.

All ballet training stresses this idea (the 180 degree turn-out: the five foot positions: the epaulements, effaces, etc.). It isn't a matter of one being a superior method of dancing for the theatre; they are just different. Why should it seem against nature to have two, or more, systems of theatre dancing?

PC-R: There is room in the theatre for all systems—which can find their tenancy backed by an audience paying at the box office. But when one system supports itself on the assertion of what it gives that another system does not give . . . then the claim must be better proven than it has been by what modern dance we have seen here.

The new Kurt Jooss, re-organising at Dusseldorf, and the current Graham tour should show whether or not the leading modern dancers can bring to the dance theatre fresh and more free ideas.

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This Lac Des Cygnes

WHAT does *Lac des Cygnes* need? Cutting the first act completely, of course. But after that?

I would make a digest version of the various time killing swan and cygnet dances in act two but leave it more or less as it stands. With only this proviso: that the *corps* dances, rather than changes from foot to foot with all the dramatic intensity of an antique pendulum and the rhythmic competence of a child with its first vibraphone.

Act three could stand with merely the cabaret deleted, using perhaps the Neapolitan dance as sole entertainment "spot". And act four, I suppose, could be appended as a brief epilogue. So the four act bore would become a two-act-and-epilogue entertainment.

Apart from the obvious things, such as giving benzedrine to the musicians and refusing to show the lighting expert the press report which called his work "magic" (perhaps the word "lantern" was mislaid?), only one other change: re-orchestrate the perfect dance music of Tchaikowski which is still fettered shamefully by the limited orchestral scoring technique of the last century.

If this reads like so much barbarism and anarchy: why not? *Lac des Cygnes* is mostly a long dialogue between excellent and tawdry background dancing as a frame for some of the finest classical dancing—for the principals—which we have in the ballet language.

Certainly it is barbaric to cut a Rubens in three to fit above the mantle-piece. But nobody should complain if we respray the gilt on the frame.

And that is all I suggest.

Fonteyn: The first *Lac* of this season gave the stage to Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes. Fonteyn adds to her characterization rather than eases it as she might feel, in her position, safe to do. Somes danced with a sureness and elevation which amazed even his most fervent admirers, in whose index I am not too far down. If I say he danced as the principal soloist of

a major company should do, it would be true. In Somes, Sadler's Wells have the only man in the company who could share a stage with Fonteyn and at least equal her reception.

Nerina: Nadia Nerina has the sharp point of an icicle and, sadly, almost the same propensity for remaining chilled. Perhaps she feels a cold and tight-pouted face is essential for this role?

I assure her it is not. If a young girl is to dance the role, I am more than prepared to accept a young Odette altogether. She may defreeze immediately she realizes her saviour is arrived—and I will not regret the change.

If she brought a quality of her own to the role, it was a pert and rapid femininity which, sometimes more by luck than preparation, spun neatly upon sure line. Only in a few too-rapid turns did the resultant arabesque refuse to establish itself inside the time allotted.

A refreshing performance but one that needs a little more meaning, and a little less m.p.g.

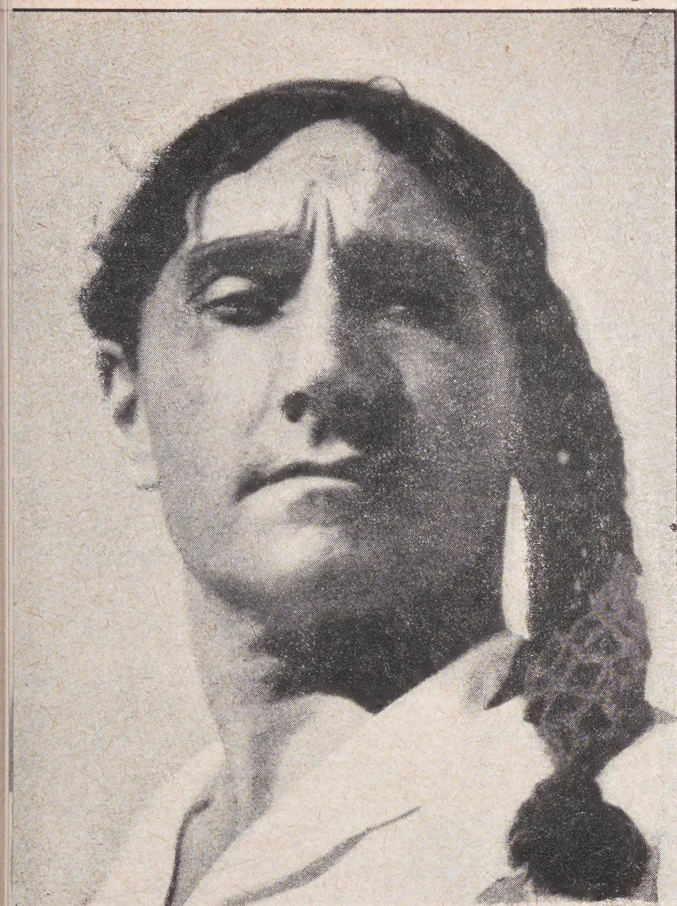
Jackson: The worry of Rowena Jackson's portrayal of Odette Odile is that she brings nothing to it. It is neither bad enough to boo, nor good enough to cheer. It is a damaging compliment to say of a dancer that she is quite good. Sadly, so it must be said of Jackson.

If only she can infiltrate something distinctively her own, of her own personality, she will immediately come alive. At the moment, for lack of personal feeling, her portrayal is insincere and uninteresting.

With Tchaikowski's music as concretely favoured as it is, there should be more effort made to revive *Lac* in more suave guise than this present production.

A classic is worthy of the name because it holds within itself a quality which cannot wear thin.

Having this, it is not co-essential that it must remain untouched, unchanged.



Eagle of Dance

From Page Three

again: male dancers must remain still, without a wiggling of hips... he must dance like a man.

Ballet, at the moment riding the crest of a large public interest, is coincidentally at its lowest physical ebb. The male dancer is as rare a species in our ballet as once he was all-pervading. A softening of technique, a lowering of ambitions, has caused a decline in masculinity which is ballet's greatest danger.

Ballerinas we have. Strong, technically proficient, beautifully feminine. But men are few.

And it is now, when ballet is in this crisis—and believe me it is real—that the Spanish dancer thinks of coming to ballet for extra technique and scope!

The major appreciated quality of flamenco dancing is its virility, the tight, strong "snap" of healthy bodies. In other words, the very qualities which ballet lacks. In technical scope, ballet itself is groping wildly for new modes of expression—the standard and traditional vocabulary has been outworn by usage. Like a spoken language, ballet is turning to colloquialisms, to "slang" in an effort to inject virility and more expressive modernism.

Spanish dance, too, must constantly seek transfusions of new

blood. But the blood must be fresh itself. Ballet is not the source to supply. These experiments with mixed Spanish and ballet techniques will alienate audiences because the similarity with ballet will not be accepted.

Better by far that the famous flamenco dancers should seek their fresh blood—both dancers and ideas—in Spain itself. I should say that, undoubtedly, the amateur folk-dance groups which form almost unwittingly would provide ideas and talent. I was impressed by a number of these young girls who visited London some time ago. Their vivacity, untiring interest in their work and sheer humanity brought the warmth of vital contact to the audience which so much of today's dancing lacks.

Spanish dancing needs, for once, to listen to its older generation. I rarely find myself agreeing with that generation: but here, in Escudero, the advice is young, not old. Escudero has not retired as well he might, at sixty. Instead he is in class, teaching the dance he has loved and lived a lifetime.

His advice—dance like a man—pleads for genuine, virile dancing in the finest flamenco tradition. Both the established and the younger dancers now coming up in Spain will profit by remembering the injunction.

[Reprinted by courtesy of the B.B.C. Spanish Programme Section.]



Margot Fonteyn



Nadia Nerina



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bullet digest

From page 17

A BABY girl was born to Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet dancer Elaine Fiffeld during April. Our congratulations . . .

AFTER an extensive search, Gene Kelly picked four young dancers to complete the dancing group to perform with him, Van Johnson and Cyd Charisse in M-G-M's newly-completed CinemaScope colour musical, *Brigadoon*.

The dancers selected for the picture are Isobel Mirrow, who makes her film debut after six years with Ballet Theatre; Sallie Whalen, former soloist and prima ballerina with the San Francisco Opera Ballet; Jane Fischer, who performed in twelve operas with the St. Louis Municipal Opera Ballet; and Bob Petrovitch, dancer with the Civic Light Opera Company in Los Angeles.

Petrovitch is featured in the spectacular sword dance, which is highlighted by the appearance of Hugh Laing, who also makes his screen debut.

More than thirty dancers were gathered by Kelly for the picture, which was directed by Vincente Minnelli and produced by Arthur Freed. Included is Virginia Bosler, from the original Broadway cast of *Brigadoon* and currently under contract to Agnes de Mille's Dance Theatre.

VIOLETTA ELVIN returns, after the absence forced by her injury during the American tour, to the Wells on May 21. On this evening she will dance in Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial*. Leonide Massine is also being negotiated as a guest of the company later in the year, probably at the Edinburgh Festival in his old ballet *Le Tricorne*.

MARGOT FONTEYN was featured in an excerpt from *Ninette de Valois' Checkmate* in the "Thanks to Ally Pally" programme on television. Rowena Jackson danced the variation from the *Black Swan* in Eric Robinson's "Music for You". Maryon Lane, Pirmin Trecu and David Poole were all seen in Kenneth Macmillan's *The Dreamers*.

JULIA FARRON is to be seen dancing the Black Queen in *Checkmate*, the revival of which is to be staged this month. Anne Heaton is to be seen in the role of *Giselle*, which she danced on the recent American tour.

ALFRED RODRIGUES is

producing a new revue, and is also doing the choreography for a new work to be done by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in South Africa; so will not be seen in London until the autumn.

L'OISEAU DE FEU, which is to be presented by the Sadler's Wells Company at the Edinburgh Festival, will have Margot Fonteyn dancing in the name role, which is being recreated for her by Karsavina, who danced in the original production. Michael Somes will be Ivan Tsarevich, the role danced by Michel Fokine and Frederick Ashton will be seen as Kostchei, the Immortal, the role first danced by Enrico Cecchetti.

AN interesting dance experiment is being used by the Douglas Fairbanks television company here this month. To a choreographic script by Ram Gopal they are setting Gopal himself and Violetta Elvin. The film, which has American video distribution, will run for thirty minutes and will be completely Indian in format and dance ideas. No ballet technique will be involved, apparently. Pavolova danced at one time with Shankar and proposed dancing with Escudero, but otherwise little partnering of ballet dancers and dancers of Indian or other classical styles has taken place. After her initial return in *Ballet Imperial*, Elvin will make her first major appearance in *Sleeping Beauty* the following week.

LATE NEWS . . .

Jerome Robbins will choreograph *Pajama Game*, the garment industry musical, set to open on Broadway . . . Hanya Holm is to do *Golden Apple* . . . Ballet Theatre has premiered a new work, *Leaf in the Wind* by William Dollar . . . Eugene Tanner danced the lead . . . David Rahe quotes Massaya Fujima (of the Kabuki dancers) as being interested in ballet but finding it "mechanical, superficial" (in *Dancing Star* for which Rahe is New York critic) . . . The Katherine Dunham school in New York has closed . . . In addition to *Firebird* and *Tricorne*, Massine may also revive *Les Matelots* for Sadler's Wells this year . . . Doubrovskaya has replaced Nijinska with the Cuevas company and Allanova is to create a new ballet for this company . . . Tcherina (see centre pages) is to make the dance film *Mata Hari* in Italy . . . Alfred Rodrigues will choreograph *Cafe du Sport* to Anthony Hopkins music for Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet . . .

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